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Testimony

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Tax Collector

HB 7192: An Act Concerning Municipal & Regional Opportunities and Efficiencies

My name is Peter Juszczynski, and I am the elected Tax Collector for the Town of Windsor Locks. I am submitting this written testimony opposing HB 7192, in particular the component that would remove elected tax collectors and allowing the municipality to choose a replacement. I urge the committee to reject the bill based on several factors.

Connecticut is a Home Rule state, and municipalities have been given the right to choose the form of government it wants to implement. Many communities such as Windsor Locks have adopted a Charter, which is the governing document of the town. Charter Revision Commissions are the mechanism that allows any community to make changes to their Charter. Revising Charters are designed to be slow and thought provoking. It is designed to have a public conversation within the community, and to give all residents their say in how the town will be governed. In fact, the town of Windsor Locks has rejected the idea of appointing its tax collector during the last Charter revision. HB 7192 would fundamentally change the form of government of many towns, and would create a situation where the municipality will be at odds with its governing documents.

I believe that the intent of this legislation is to try to create a circumstance where all tax collectors are professionals and are not impacted by political pressure. The truth is that the vast majority of elected collectors are professionals, and have received, or are in the process of receiving their certification. The legislation would eliminate the elected collector, and then allow the municipality to set the criteria of their next collector. In other words, there is nothing restricting the appointing board in the municipality to make a political appointment, someone that has no certification or experience within our profession. I would also argue that being appointed by an elected board is more political than standing on your record in office and asking for the continued support of the residents we serve.

The State of Connecticut is made of up of 169 unique municipalities, that have been allowed to forge their own path for the future. Proposing a fundamental change to over 40% of all towns in less than a year does not seem prudent and removes choice from the voters of those municipalities.

In summary, the proposed bill that would eliminate elected tax collectors has many problems. I believe the bill would limit choice, cause conflicts in governing, and could potentially replace certified professionals with inexperienced collectors. I urge the committee to reject this provision of the bill.

Respectfully Submitted
Peter Juszczynski, CCMC, CCMO
Town Of Windsor Locks Tax Collector